

# How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards

Public school districts that choose the healthy food option of Healthy Food Certification (HFC) must ensure that all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (CNS). Before selling any foods made from scratch to students, schools must document that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS.

## Foods that Require Standardized Recipes

Schools must have standardized recipes on file that indicate the nutrition information per serving for calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and sugars. Recipes with nutrition information are required for the two categories of foods below.

- **Foods prepared from scratch using a recipe:** Examples include entrees *sold only a la carte* (i.e., not as part of reimbursable meals), e.g., pizza, chef's salad, and chicken nuggets; soups; cooked grains such as rice and pasta with added fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter) and salt; cooked vegetables with added fat (e.g., oil, margarine, or butter) and salt; salad with dressing; fruit smoothies; and baked goods such as muffins and cookies. Recipes for these foods must provide the nutrition information per serving.
- **Foods that have additional ingredients added after purchasing:** Examples include popping popcorn kernels in oil; assembling a sandwich; making muffins from a mix and adding butter and eggs; adding sprinkles to commercial frozen cookie dough; making salads with dressing, and cooking vegetables, rice, and pasta with oil, margarine, or butter. Schools must create a recipe for these foods based on the specific amount of each ingredient, and then conduct a nutrient analysis to determine the nutrition information per serving.



If the nutrition information per serving is missing, schools must conduct a nutrient analysis of the recipe.

The Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, [Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#), summarizes the requirements and steps for conducting a nutrient analysis of recipes.

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## Reviewing Products

Schools must use the CSDE's worksheets to determine if a standardized recipe's nutrition information per serving complies with the CNS. Each worksheet evaluate a specific food category, including

- Worksheet 1: Snacks;
- Worksheet 2: Yogurt and Pudding;
- Worksheet 3: Smoothies;
- Worksheet 4: Fruits and Vegetables;
- Worksheet 5: Soups;
- Worksheet 6: Cooked Grains;
- Worksheet 7: Entrees;
- Worksheet 8: Non-entree Combination Foods;
- Worksheet 9: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes; and
- Worksheet 10: Evaluating Recipes for Sugars.

These worksheets and additional guidance on evaluating foods and beverages are available in the “[How To](#)” section of the CSDE's [CNS](#) webpage.

For guidance on evaluating commercial foods, refer to the CSDE's resource, *[How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#)*, and visit the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

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## Common Compliance Issues

With the exception of foods sold to students at events that meet the exemption criteria of Connecticut's HFC statute, all foods prepared from scratch and sold to students separately from reimbursable meals must comply with the CNS. For guidance on food and beverage exemptions, refer to the CSDE's resource, [\*Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools\*](#).

Schools can ensure that foods prepared from scratch comply with the CNS by avoiding the common compliance issues indicated below.

- **Recipes with nutrition information are not available:** Before selling any foods made from scratch, check that the school has 1) an accurate standardized recipe that indicates the nutrition information per serving (including calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and sugars); and 2) completed the appropriate CNS worksheet documenting that the recipe's serving complies with the CNS (see "[Reviewing Products](#)" in this document). Without this information, the food cannot be sold to students because it is impossible to determine if the food complies with the CNS.
- **Recipes are missing nutrition information:** Without complete nutrition information, schools cannot determine if the recipe's serving complies with the CNS. Check recipes to ensure that 1) they include all required nutrition information (including calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and sugars); and 2) the nutrition information per serving complies with the CNS.

**Note:** The most common missing nutrient values for recipes are trans fats and sugars. A missing nutrient value does **not** mean that the recipe does not contain that nutrient. For example, a software program might use an asterisk (\*) or "NA" (not available) to indicate a missing value for trans fat. However, the recipe could still contain trans fat. In this case, the school must refer to the recipe to ensure that it does not contain any ingredients with partially hydrogenated oils.

- **Not determining the nutrition information for foods that have additional ingredients added after purchasing:** Adding ingredients to a purchased product changes its nutrition information requires a nutrient analysis to determine if the serving complies with the CNS. For example, if sprinkles are added to a commercial frozen sugar cookie before baking, the school must conduct a nutrient analysis to determine if the combined nutrition information for both ingredients (sugar cookie and sprinkles) meets the CNS. The school should prepare a standardized recipe indicating the specific amount of each ingredient (cookie and sprinkles) and the nutrition information per serving.

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## Resources

CNS Worksheet 1: Snacks (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet1\\_Snacks.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet1_Snacks.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 2: Snacks (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet2\\_Yogurt\\_Pudding.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet2_Yogurt_Pudding.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 3: Smoothies (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet3\\_Smoothies.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet3_Smoothies.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 4: Fruits and Vegetables (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet4\\_Fruits\\_Vegetables.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet4_Fruits_Vegetables.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 5: Soups (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet5\\_Soups.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet5_Soups.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 6: Cooked Grains (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet6\\_Cooked\\_Grains.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet6_Cooked_Grains.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 7: Entrees (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet7\\_Entrees.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet7_Entrees.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 8: Non-entree Combination Foods (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet8\\_Nonentree\\_Combination\\_Food.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet8_Nonentree_Combination_Food.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 9: Nutrient Analysis of Recipes (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet9\\_Nutrient\\_Analysis\\_Recipes.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet9_Nutrient_Analysis_Recipes.xlsx)

CNS Worksheet 10: Evaluating Recipes for Sugars (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS\\_worksheet10\\_Evaluate\\_Recipes\\_Sugars.xlsx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/CNS_worksheet10_Evaluate_Recipes_Sugars.xlsx)

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

Ensuring District Compliance with HFC (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Ensuring\\_District\\_Compliance\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Ensuring_District_Compliance_HFC.pdf)

# How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards

Evaluate Foods for CNS Compliance (“How To” section of CSDE’s Connecticut Nutrition Standards webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/How-To>

Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards/How-To>

Exemptions for Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food\\_Beverage\\_Exemptions\\_Public\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Food_Beverage_Exemptions_Public_Schools.pdf)

Guidance on Evaluating Recipes for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluating\\_Recipes\\_CNS\\_Compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluating_Recipes_CNS_Compliance.pdf)

Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive\\_Foods\\_Guide\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive_Foods_Guide_HFC.pdf)

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>

How to Evaluate Foods Made from Scratch for Compliance with the CNS (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate\\_Scratch\\_Foods\\_CNS\\_Compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate_Scratch_Foods_CNS_Compliance.pdf)

How to Evaluate Purchased Foods for Compliance with the CNS (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate\\_Purchased\\_Foods\\_CNS.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate_Purchased_Foods_CNS.pdf)

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/List-of-Acceptable-Foods-and-Beverages>

Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Requirements_Competitive_Foods_HFC.pdf)

Requirements for Food and Beverage Fundraisers in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Fundraiser_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in School Stores in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/School\\_Store\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/School_Store_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

Requirements for Foods and Beverages in Vending Machines in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Vending\\_Machine\\_Requirements\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Vending_Machine_Requirements_HFC.pdf)

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Requirements for Selling Foods and Beverages in Adult Education Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/AdultEdHFC.pdf>

Resources for Meeting the Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Resources\\_Federal\\_State\\_Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Resources_Federal_State_Requirements_Competitive_Foods.pdf)

Sample Fundraiser Form for Healthy Food Certification (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Sample\\_Fundraiser\\_Form\\_HFC.docx](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Sample_Fundraiser_Form_HFC.docx)

Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#StandardizedRecipes>

Summary Chart: Federal and State Requirements for Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Summary\\_Chart\\_Requirements\\_Competitive\\_Foods\\_HFC.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Summary_Chart_Requirements_Competitive_Foods_HFC.pdf)

Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut\\_Nutrition\\_Standards\\_Summary.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/CNS/Connecticut_Nutrition_Standards_Summary.pdf)

Weights and Measures (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#WeightsMeasures>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpages or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate\\_Scratch\\_Foods\\_CNS\\_Compliance.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Evaluate_Scratch_Foods_CNS_Compliance.pdf).

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